

ENGLISH FIELD-ANTHROPOLOGY.¹

THE first organised mission sent out from this country for purely anthropological research was the outcome of Dr. Haddon's visit to Torres Straits in 1888, when he began to collect materials for a study of the natives. Ten years later, with the assistance of a fully-equipped expedition, he was able to complete the work. The reports will occupy six volumes, of which this is the first to be completed; two parts of volume ii. (Physiology and Psychology) have already appeared.

These savages constitute the ethnological frontier between Australia and New Guinea, but are distinctly Papuan. They have been in contact with white pearl-shellers and missionaries for about thirty years, and most of them are now Christianised. Though they are not a people of striking idiosyncrasy, such as the Arunta of Central Australia, and do not add to the romance of ethnology, yet this careful study of them has enriched science with several unique facts and many variations from type which will have considerable influence upon theory.

The account of the social organisation is based upon carefully revised genealogies, compiled by Dr. Rivers, which form a register of births, marriages and deaths, extending back for a hundred years. The method is an excellent one. The native system of kinship is the classificatory, with three non-essential features, which are developed in a remarkable way. The first of these is the practice of exchanging names, which seems to have been almost as common as, say, our custom of exchanging cards. The task of the genealogist was thus rendered very laborious. Secondly, the number of reciprocal terms is unprecedentedly large. Thus the term *tukoiab* denotes the relationship of brother to brother and sister to sister; it is also used—and here the classificatory system appears—of all men of the same generation in the father's clan, the mother's clan, and the father's mother's clan, also of the sons of a brother and those of a sister, and of the sons of two sisters. Brothers' wives, however, are not called "wives" of *ego*; nor is there any trace of group-marriage. Polygamy was once frequent, but polyandry is unknown. The terms of relationship are also used as terms of address. In the third place we have what is perhaps the best example extant of the regulation of social duties and privileges by kinship. The division both of labour and of rights is

thus harmoniously arranged. An apparently unique instance is the power of stopping fights, belonging especially to the relationship of *wadiwam* (the reciprocal term for maternal uncle and nephew).

Totemism is very fully developed, both in its social and religious aspects, and has important peculiarities. Besides the principal totem a clan possesses a subsidiary one. Two important totems are crescent-shaped ornaments of tortoise-shell, with no reference to any animal or plant; they are merely decorative relics



FIG. 1.—Performer at the Saw-fish Dance, Waiben.

¹ "Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits. Vol. v. Sociology, Magic and Religion of the Western Islanders." Edited by A. C. Haddon, Sc.D., F.R.S., Fellow of Christ's College, Lecturer on Ethnology in the University of Cambridge. Pp. xii+378; plates xxii. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1904.) Price 25s. net.

from the wardrobe of the hero Kwoiam, a warrior whose exploits form a considerable saga and who is more or less definitely apotheosised. These relics resemble in the powers attached to them the *churinga* of the Central Australians. But Kwoiam himself is a totem! Magical ceremonies are performed, as in Australia, to increase the supply of the totem animals as well as of the crops. An interesting feature of totemic society is the way in which the clan members try to live up to the character of their totems. The

Cassowary men, for instance, are pugnacious, long-legged, and good runners.

Though marriage is strictly forbidden within the totem clan, its regulation belongs to kinship rather than to totemism. The phratry system, so common in Australia, seems to have formerly existed. A man sometimes lives with his wife's people, a case apparently due to circumstances which have no connection with maternal descent. The custom of the levirate is known, but it is not obligatory, and there is nothing to show it to be a survival of polyandry. It is wrong to marry an old woman. The eldest daughter is always married first. Young men rub their bodies with "sweetheart medicine" to attract the notice of the girls. It is the universal custom for the women to propose to the men.

The heads of dead persons are cured, painted and kept by the nearest relatives. It is to be noted that no worship is paid to them. Ancestor worship is unknown; the custom in question is solely due to affection. One of their funeral customs is a remarkable parallel to the ancient Roman practice; persons carefully "got up" to represent dead relatives dance at the burial.

Very interesting features are presented by the customs



FIG. 2.—The Cave of Augudalkula in the Sacred Island of Pulu.

which have to do with property. There is no group or clan ownership of land; every inch of ground is owned by some individual. A man's property is divided at his death among his children. In default of male issue, a daughter may inherit. They have a system of leasing their gardens. If a man wants to buy a canoe he can pay by instalments with immediate possession, the *Times*' scheme being here anticipated.

The account of the native religion gives an impression of incomplete study. We are told that there is no supernatural sanction for morality; even the totems are not really worshipped. We hear incidentally that the natives pray to their "heroes." An analysis of their habits of prayer would have been instructive. More information about the chief hero, Kwoiam, would have been welcome. A folk-tale speaks of the first created man: is this idea borrowed from missionaries? The concluding sentence of the volume is, "unless the above-mentioned heroes be regarded as gods, I think it can be definitely stated that the western islanders had no deities, and certainly they had no conception of a Supreme God."

We have only mentioned a few of the many facts which will assist in throwing light on old problems. That so much was done in so short a time speaks well for the energy of the expedition. But could not the hundred odd pages of folk-tales, fully reported, have been reduced? A précis of such seems adequate.

The volume is a fine monument of English anthropology, and reflects great credit on the enterprise and devotion of Dr. Haddon and his colleagues. It is by such work as this that the "science of man" is justified.

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PROGRESS IN WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

IT is eighteen months or more since Mr. Marconi succeeded in establishing wireless communication across the Atlantic. On that occasion a few congratulatory messages were exchanged, a great deal was written on the subject in the Press, and the more timorous of cable shareholders were reported to be much troubled. A little later the attempt was made to demonstrate that this achievement was not merely a firework display, but was capable of direct commercial application; the Marconi Co. entered into a contract to supply the *Times* with news from America by wireless telegraphy, and for a day or so there appeared items of news in that paper under the heading "By Marconigraph." But after a few messages something went wrong, and the public were given to understand that a piece of auxiliary machinery had broken down. It is to be presumed that this piece of machinery has at length been repaired, for Mr. Marconi has once again come very much to the front with long-distance transmission work. The announcement, which we published last week, that he had been successful in maintaining a supply of news to the *Campania* on her voyage across the Atlantic with a regularity sufficient to allow of the publication of a daily paper on board that vessel affords evidence that he is still steadily pushing forward the practical development of wireless telegraphy. We have repeatedly urged in these columns that the real work of wireless telegraphy

lay in communication with ships, and it is therefore a greater pleasure to record this latest development than it would be to announce the reopening of Transatlantic communication.

The experiments on board the *Campania* appear to have been thoroughly successful in all respects. Not only was the vessel never out of touch either with one or other of the three large power installations, but she was also for a considerable period in touch with both sides. It seems, however, that the communication was only one sided; this is, of course, only what was to be expected, but it is to be hoped that Mr. Marconi's efforts will be directed to making it reciprocal, and that before long we shall hear the announcement of this further success. It is stated that the other ships of the Cunard line are to be installed with apparatus similar to that on the *Campania*, and that a regular news service will be established to all of them. There can be no question but that this will tend very greatly to enliven the voyage across the Atlantic, and that in many other respects it will be of great practical utility.